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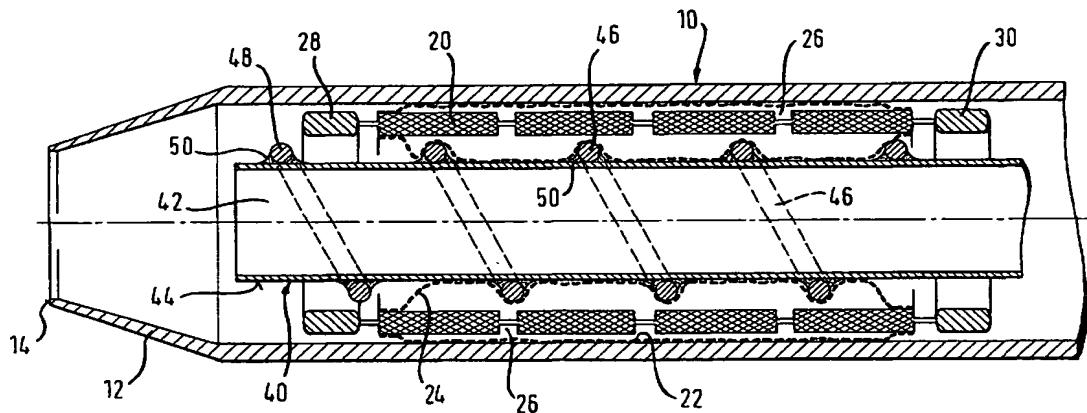
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(54) Title: LOADING AND DELIVERY OF SELF-EXPANDING STENTS



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(57) Abstract: A covered self-expanding stent (20) can be restrained against axial movement with a pusher (40) within the lumen of the stent that carries a spiral of wire (48) that provides protrusions that are accommodated within a luminal covering layer (24) radially inside the stent body. The protrusions distribute the stress over the full length of the stent. The pusher can be removed from the stent lumen by "unscrewing" the spiral relative to the covering layer (24). When the stent expands, the pusher can be withdrawn proximally, out of the stent lumen, without any need for rotatory movement.